

*City of Morgantown*  
**Human Rights Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes September 18, 2014**

**Present:** Jan Derry, Chair  
Michael Fike  
Brian Jara  
Anne Marlene Robinson-Savino, Vice Chair  
Don Spencer, Secretary  
Fran Whiteman  
Dave Bott, Administrative Representative  
Bob Jones, Research Consultant  
Lynn Castro, Research Associate

**Meeting called to order** by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:40 p.m. The commissioners approved the agenda without additions or corrections.

**Public Session:** No visitors attended the meeting.

**Minutes:** On a motion by Marlene Robinson-Savino and seconded by Brian Jara, the minutes of the August 21, 2014 meeting were approved without dissent.

**Communications:** Mike Fike reported increased problems with his hearing and the need for accommodation in terms meeting time duration and possible augmentation of his hearing device. He also reported that the City is in the process of changing the Rental Housing Advisory Committee into a Housing Commission. The most critical issue thus far has been determining who the membership of the Commission shall be: city residents or persons designated by the institutions and departments involved. Concern was expressed by Bob Jones and others that the membership include persons who was in need of accessible housing. Questions were also raised about where the staffing support would come from for the Commission.

**Progress Reports:** Jan Derry reported on her meeting with City Manager Jeff Mikorski. On the matter of being able to establish a phone line which could provide links with other numbers, Mikorski said that he would have to check that out to see if the system capacity exists to provide such relay call service.

On the matter of stipend support for an intern, he said that various options could be explored. Dave Bott indicated that an intern could help with the updating of the Affirmative Action Plan. Arrangements might able to be made for an individual to work 7-8 hours a week for \$1,000 per semester. Arrangements would need to be worked out in December for the second semester of the current year. Jan Derry said that undergraduate time might also be available to do statistical work and searches through NWVCIL (North West Virginia Center for Independent Living).

On the matter of the City action on the approval of the HRC bylaws, she expressed concern that the bylaws were said to not be in compliance with the City ordinance for the HRC and needed more work to be consistent with acceptable bylaw standards. She cited an internet resource which discusses pitfalls relating to bylaws being able to be helpful or hurtful. She asked Don Spencer to give the bylaw critique received from the City attorney

to Fran Whiteman and to distribute the bylaw information to all members of the Commission.

Fran Whiteman reported on the Human Rights Campaign feedback on the City submission of the HRC profile relating to the Municipal Equality Index. The City score was 38 points and according to the Human Rights Campaign standards, the City is deficient in several categories of the Index. Because this is the first year that the City has completed the profile for the Index, no comparison can be made with previous City scores. It is hoped that the City will take action to make improvements in the year ahead. Fran Whiteman will prepare a cover letter for distributing the scorecard on the Index to members of the City Council.

Dave Bott reported on the status of interns for the Commission in the comments provided in a previous paragraph.

Don Spencer said that there was no new report on the Human Rights Film Festival.

Brian Jara reported on the status of civil rights history course being offered at WVU. He said that such courses are in place but that there are no such courses offered at the high school or K-12 levels. He is exploring what is involved with arranging an advanced placement course for high school students.

Dave Bott reported that the HRC has approximately \$1,800 remaining of the \$2,500 allocated for the Human Rights Needs Survey from Community Development Block Grant funding. It is hope that some of those funds can be used for continuing the subscription for Survey Monkey – the software service which has been invaluable for gathering, processing, and storing data relating to the survey. An additional \$500 has been added to the account from other sources making a total \$2,300 amount currently available.

**Human Rights Need Survey Report:** Bob Jones lauded the contributions of Lynn Castro in entering the survey data for tabulation and in participating in the decision-making relating to processing the surveys. He next presented a second draft (distributed by email in advance of the August and September HRC meetings) of a summary report on the survey outcomes voluntarily prepared by Donna Spencer, PhD, a medical school researcher, a former long term resident of Morgantown and graduate student at WVU. This second draft included charts and graphs as well as a list of partnering organization which had assisted in the distribution of the survey.

Members were asked if there were any further changes of corrections which need to be made before the final draft is prepared. Commission members indicated that it could be noted that the survey was widely advertised and made available in accessible print for persons with sight disabilities. It was also noted that the survey is a foundation, called for in the City HRC ordinance, on which the Commission is to proceed with its work. Two corrections were made in the names of partnering organizations listed.

Jones then proceeded to present power point presentation slides which can be utilized in presenting the need survey report to City Council and to others.

**Committee on Diversity and Representation:** Marlene Robinson-Savino presented a report on the first meetings of a committee working on profiling representation in municipal government. The committee, which also included Bob Jones and Don Spencer, also met with Rob Lyons, Director of Affirmative Action and Franklin Hairston, Affirmative Action Planner, at the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A written report on the two meetings was provided.

One point of clarification by the Commission was requested. Robinson- Savino asked the committee to confirm that the scope of the committee work was to include both municipal volunteers and departments. Consensus confirmation was given. It was also noted that the work of the committee relates to the “Sustaining Equitable Inclusivity” proposal which had been presented to Jeff Mikorski in 2013. A copy of the approved outline was included in the agenda packet.

**New Business:** It was noted that the City is on schedule to prepare a list of its State legislative priorities for the 2015 Legislative Session. The Commission agreed that a request should be made to the City Council to include support for the Employment and Housing Non-Discrimination Act bills which will be submitted in this coming session. By unanimous consensus the Commission members agreed that a letter should be written making this request. Secretary Don Spencer agreed to prepare a draft letter for the chair’s signature.

**Regular Meeting Items:** Two items were added to the HRC Annual Calendar for the month of October: Disability Awareness Month and LGBTQ History Month. Due to the lateness of the hour, there were no Commissioner reports.

The next meeting of the Commission was confirmed to be held on October 16, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Spencer  
Secretary